

### CLAIMS

1. A method of treatment of malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract comprising: diagnosis of a malabsorbtive condition of the gastrointestinal tract in a patient; and administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -  
5 MSH in combination with a therapeutically effective amount of artichoke leaf extract.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the malabsorptive conditions of the gastrointestinal tract are selected from the group consisting of celiac disease, tropical sprue, Whipple's disease, bacterial overgrowth, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, allergic  
10 gastroenteritis, lymphoma-associated diffuse enteritis and acute infectious enteritis.
3. The method of claim 1 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of artichoke  
15 leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.
5. The method of claim 1 wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.
6. A method of treating celiac disease comprising: diagnosing a patient with celiac disease; administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH  
20 in combination with a therapeutic amount of artichoke leaf extract.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
8. The method of claim 6 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.
- 5 9. The method of claim 6 wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.
10. A method of prevention of complications associated with malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract consisting of: diagnosis of complications associated with malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract in a patient; and  
10 administering to the patient a therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with artichoke leaf extract.
11. The method of prevention of claim 10 wherein the malabsorption conditions of the gastrointestinal tract are selected from the group consisting of celiac disease, tropical sprue, Whipple's disease, bacterial overgrowth, Crohn's disease, ulcerative  
15 colitis, allergic gastroenteritis, lymphoma-associated diffuse enteritis and acute infectious enteritis.
12. The method of prevention of claim 10 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
- 20 13. The method of prevention of claim 10 wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.

14. The method of prevention of claim 10 wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.
15. A method of preventing complications related to celiac disease comprising:  
diagnosing a patient with celiac disease; administering to the patient a  
5 therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with a therapeutic amount of artichoke leaf extract.
16. The method of prevention of claim 15 wherein the therapeutically effective amount of  $\alpha$ -MSH and/or its derivatives is at least about 25 mg/kg of body weight of the patient.
- 10 17. The method of prevention of claim 15 wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least about 300 to 1000 mgs.
18. The method of prevention of claim 15 wherein the administration is selected from the group consisting of oral, mucous membrane, anal and parenteral.
19. A pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of malabsorption conditions  
15 comprising  $\alpha$ -MSH in combination with derivatives of  $\alpha$ -MSH and artichoke leaf extract.
20. The composition of claim 19 wherein the  $\alpha$ -MSH is at least about 25 mg/kg of a recipient's body weight.
21. The composition of claim 20 wherein the  $\alpha$ -MSH is a combination of  $\alpha$ -MSH and  
20 derivatives of  $\alpha$ -MSH.

22. The composition of claim 21 wherein the derivative of  $\alpha$ -MSH is VPKccKPV  
(SEQ ID NO: 5).
23. The composition of claim 20 wherein the artichoke leaf extract is at least about  
300 to 1000 mgs.